

News

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Boston, MA 02203

Internet address: <http://stats.bls.gov/r01news.htm>

For information: (617) 565-2327

Media information: (617) 565-2331

Fax-on-demand: (617) 565-9167

Fax Code: 9710

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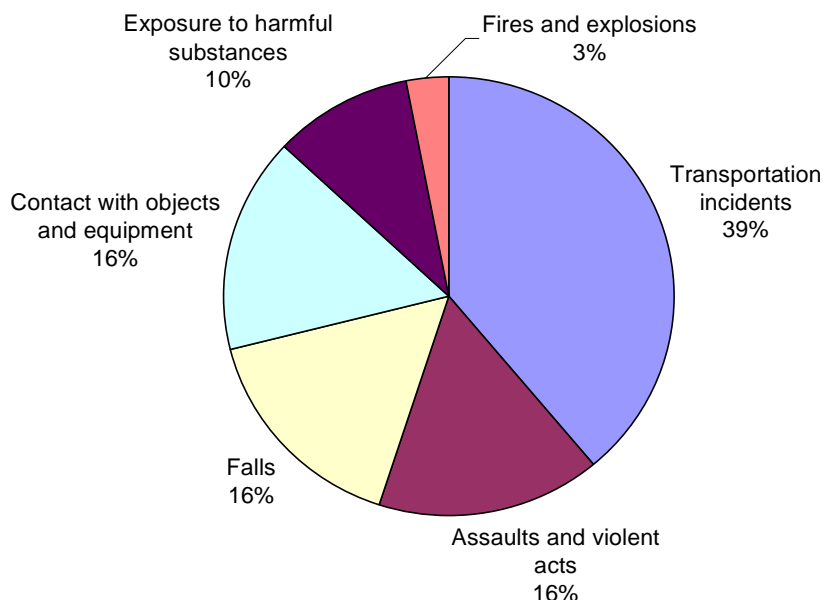
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September 14, 1999

Fatal Work Injuries in New England Total 176 in 1998

Work-related fatalities in New England totaled 176 in 1998 compared with 163 in the previous year according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Denis M. McSweeney attributed the increase in fatalities to a continued regional rise in highway crashes and to exposure to harmful substances or environments that led to electrocutions and drowning. Job-related highway fatalities in New England such as multi-vehicle crashes, vehicles hitting objects on the side of the road, and rollovers resulted in 36 worker fatalities or 1 of every 5 job-related deaths during 1998.

Percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure in New England, 1998



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Still, almost half of the worker fatalities in the transportation incidents category did not occur on the highway. Incidents involving farm tractors and forklifts accounted for 11 fatalities, 10 pedestrian workers died after being struck by vehicles, 5 were fatally injured on a water vehicle and 5 died in an aircraft. (See table 1.)

McSweeney commented that violence has emerged as an important safety issue in today's workplace. The number of assaults and violent acts, including suicides, increased in 1998 to 28. Homicide was the leading cause of death in this category, resulting in 16 fatalities of which 9 were shooting incidents. There were 10 suicides at work in 1998, double the number from the prior year.

During 1998, there were 28 deaths resulting from on-the-job falls and another 28 fatalities from contact with objects or equipment which includes events where workers were struck by falling objects such as trees (9 fatalities), rolling vehicles or machines (6 fatalities), caught in equipment or machinery (5 fatalities), and caught in or crushed in collapsing structures (3 fatalities).

Over 55 percent of fatally injured workers in New England during 1998 were under 45 years of age, and 4 percent were teenagers. (See table 2.) Men accounted for 94 percent of New England fatalities, primarily due to the fact that women are employed in relatively less dangerous jobs. Nearly one-fifth of the fatally injured were self-employed.

The occupational group with the highest number of worker fatalities in New England was operators, fabricators, and laborers (54 deaths). Precision production, craft, and repair jobs were next highest with 39 fatalities, followed by farming, forestry, and fishing with 30 fatalities. Seventy percent of the fatal work injuries in New England occurred in these three occupational groups. (See table 3.)

The industry division with the greatest number of work-related fatalities was construction (39 deaths). McSweeney noted that construction has led the region in fatalities for five of the last six years and accounted for over one-fifth of fatal work injuries in 1998. Other industry divisions with large numbers of fatal occupational injuries were manufacturing and services (24 fatalities each); agriculture, forestry, and fishing (23 fatalities); and transportation and public utilities (22 fatalities). (See table 4.)

Methods

Data for the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries are compiled from various State and Federal administrative sources—including death certificates, workers' compensation reports and claims, reports to various regulatory agencies, and medical examiner reports—as well as news reports. Multiple sources are used because studies have shown that no single source captures all on-the-job fatalities. Source documents are matched so that each fatality is counted only once. To ensure that a fatality occurred while the decedent was at work, information is verified from two or more independent source documents, or from a source document and a follow-up questionnaire. Approximately 30 data elements are collected, coded, and tabulated, including information about the worker, the fatal incident, and the machinery or equipment involved.

Definitions

For a fatality to be considered within the scope of the program, the decedent must have been employed (that is working for pay, compensation, or profit) at the time of the event, engaged in legal work activity or present at the site of the incident as a requirement of his or her job. These criteria are generally broader than the criteria used by Federal or State agencies administering specific laws and regulations.

Data presented in this release include deaths occurring in 1998 that resulted from traumatic occupational injuries. An injury is defined as any intentional or unintentional wound or damage to the body resulting from acute exposure to thermal, mechanical, electrical, chemical, or other form of energy or from the absence of such essentials as heat or oxygen caused by a specific event or incident or series of events within a single workday or shift. Included are open wounds, intracranial and internal injuries, heatstroke, hypothermia, poisonings, and asphyxiations resulting from a short-term exposure (limited to the workers' shift), suicides and homicides, and work injuries listed as underlying or contributory causes of death.

Information on work-related fatal illnesses are excluded from the BLS census and the attached tables because of the latency period of many occupational illnesses and the resulting difficulties associated with linking illnesses to work.

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries includes data for all fatal work injuries, whether they are covered by OSHA or other Federal or State agencies, or are outside the scope of regulatory coverage. Thus, any comparison between the BLS fatality census counts and those released by other agencies should take into account the different coverage and definitions being used.

Acknowledgments:

We appreciate the effort of all State and Federal agencies that submitted source documents used to identify fatal work injuries. Among these agencies are the Occupational Safety and Health Administration; the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health; the Mine Safety and Health Administration; the Centers for Disease Control; the Employment Standards Administration (Federal Employees' Compensation and Longshore and Harbor Workers' divisions); the National Transportation Safety Board; the Department of Justice (Bureau of Justice Assistance); the U.S. Coast Guard; the Department of Energy; the State vital statistics registrars, coroners and medical examiners; the Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island Departments of Health; the Maine Bureau of Labor Standards; the Connecticut Labor Department; the Vermont Department of Labor and Industries; workers' compensation agencies; and the six New England States' highway departments.

Table 1. Number and percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure, New England, 1998.

Event or exposure(1)	Fatalities	Percent
Total.....	176	100
Contact with objects and equipment.....	28	16
Struck by object.....	16	9
Struck by falling object.....	9	5
Struck by rolling, sliding objects on floor or ground level.....	6	3
Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects.....	7	4
Caught in running equipment or machinery.....	5	3
Caught in or crushed in collapsing materials.....	5	3
Caught in or crushed in collapsing structure.....	3	2
Falls.....	28	16
Fall to lower level.....	25	14
Fall from floor, dock, or ground level.....	3	2
Fall from ladder.....	8	5
Fall from roof.....	3	2
Fall to lower level, n.e.c.(2).....	4	2
Exposure to harmful substances or environments.....	17	10
Contact with electric current.....	9	5
Contact with overhead power lines.....	7	4
Oxygen deficiency, n.e.c.(2).....	6	3
Drowning, submersion.....	4	2
Transportation incidents.....	69	39
Highway accident.....	36	20
Collision between vehicles, mobile equipment.....	16	9
Vehicle struck stationary object or equipment on side of road.....	13	7
Noncollision.....	7	4
Nonhighway (farm, industrial premises).....	11	6
Noncollision.....	9	5
Worker struck by vehicle, mobile equipment.....	10	6
Worker struck by vehicle, mobile equipment in parking lot or non-road area.....	7	4
Water vehicle.....	5	3
Fall from ship or boat, n.e.c.(2).....	4	2
Aircraft.....	5	3
During takeoff or landing.....	3	2
Fires and explosions.....	6	3
Explosion.....	4	2
Explosion, n.e.c.(2).....	3	2
Assaults and violent acts.....	28	16
Homicides.....	16	9
Shooting.....	9	5
Self-inflicted injury.....	11	6
Suicide.....	10	6

¹ Based on the 1992 BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Structures.

² Not elsewhere classified.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding. Major categories that do not meet publication criteria are not shown.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 1998.

Table 2. Number and percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by selected demographic characteristics, New England, 1998.

Demographic Characteristics	Fatalities	Percent
Total.....	176	100
Employee status		
Wage and salary workers(1).....	142	81
Self-employed(2).....	33	19
Gender		
Women.....	10	6
Men.....	166	94
Age		
19 years and under.....	7	4
20-24.....	13	7
25-34.....	34	19
35-44.....	46	26
45-54.....	36	20
55-64.....	27	15
65 years and over.....	13	7
Race		
White.....	159	90
Black.....	8	5
Asian and Pacific Islander.....	3	2
Other or unknown.....	6	3
Hispanic origin		
Hispanic.....	13	7

¹ Includes unknown employment status.

² Includes paid and unpaid family workers and may include owners of incorporated businesses or members of partnerships.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding. Major categories that do not meet publication criteria are not shown.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 1998.

Table 3. Number and percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by occupation, New England, 1998.

Occupation(1)	Fatalities	Percent
Total.....	176	100
Managerial and professional specialty.....	20	11
Executive, administrative, and managerial.....	15	9
Managers, food service and lodging establishments.....	4	2
Managers, and administrators, n.e.c.(2).....	3	2
Professional specialty.....	5	3
Technical, sales, and administrative support.....	23	13
Technical and related support occupations.....	6	3
Technicians, except health, engineering, and science.....	5	3
Sales occupations.....	11	6
Supervisors and proprietors, sales occupations.....	4	2
Sales workers, retail and personal services.....	7	4
Administrative support occupations, including clerical.....	6	3
Mail and message distributing occupations.....	3	2
Service occupations.....	10	6
Protective service occupations.....	6	3
Police and detectives.....	3	2
Service occupations, except protective and household.....	3	2
Farming, forestry, and fishing.....	30	17
Other agricultural and related occupations.....	28	16
Farm occupations, except managerial.....	4	2
Related agricultural occupations.....	6	3
Forestry and logging occupations.....	9	5
Fishers, hunters, and trappers.....	9	5
Precision production, craft, and repair.....	39	22
Mechanics and repairers.....	13	7
Mechanics and repairers, except supervisors.....	12	7
Construction trades.....	24	14
Supervisors, construction occupations.....	5	3
Construction trades except supervisors.....	19	11
Operators, fabricators, and laborers.....	54	31
Machine operators and tenders, except precision.....	6	3
Fabricators, assemblers, and hand working occupations.....	4	2
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	29	16
Motor vehicle operators.....	20	11
Material moving equipment operators.....	9	5
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers.....	19	11
Construction laborers.....	6	3
Freight, stock, and material handlers.....	3	2
Laborers, except construction.....	7	4

¹ Based on the 1990 Occupational Classification System developed by the Bureau of the Census.

² Not elsewhere classified.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding. Major categories that do not meet publication criteria are not shown.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 1998.

Table 4. Number and percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by industry, New England, 1998.

SIC(1) Industry	Fatalities	Percent
Total.....	176	100
Private sector.....	164	93
Government(2).....	12	7
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing.....	23	13
01 Agricultural production, crops.....	3	2
02 Agricultural production, livestock.....	3	2
07 Agricultural services.....	5	3
078 Landscape and horticultural services.....	5	3
08 Forestry.....	3	2
085 Forestry services.....	3	2
09 Fishing, hunting, and trapping.....	9	5
091 Commercial fishing.....	9	5
Construction.....	39	22
15 General building contractors.....	9	5
152 Residential building construction.....	8	5
16 Heavy construction, except building.....	7	4
162 Heavy construction, except highway.....	5	3
17 Special trade contractors.....	23	13
174 Masonry, stonework, and plastering.....	3	2
176 Roofing, siding, and sheet metal work.....	5	3
179 Miscellaneous special trade contractors.....	7	4
Manufacturing.....	24	14
24 Lumber and wood products.....	11	6
241 Logging.....	7	4
34 Fabricated metal products.....	3	2
Transportation and public utilities.....	22	13
42 Trucking and warehousing.....	12	7
421 Trucking and courier services, except air.....	12	7
45 Transportation by air.....	3	2
452 Air transportation, nonscheduled.....	3	2
49 Electric, gas, and sanitary services.....	4	2
Wholesale trade.....	7	4
50 Wholesale trade--durable goods.....	6	3
509 Miscellaneous durable goods.....	3	2
Retail trade.....	20	11
55 Automotive dealers and service stations.....	7	4
551 New and used car dealers.....	4	2
554 Gasoline service stations.....	3	2
58 Eating and drinking places.....	5	3
581 Eating and drinking places.....	5	3
59 Miscellaneous retail.....	4	2

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 4. Number and percent distribution of fatal occupational injuries by industry, New England, 1998 -- Continued

	Finance, insurance, and real estate.....	5	3
60	Depository institutions.....	4	2
602	Commercial banks.....	3	2
	Services.....	24	14
70	Hotels and other lodging places.....	3	2
701	Hotels and motels.....	3	2
73	Business services.....	4	2
75	Auto repair, services, and parking.....	4	2
79	Amusement and recreation services.....	5	3

¹ Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1987 edition.

² Includes fatalities to workers employed by government (Federal, State and Local) organizations, regardless of industry.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding. Major categories that do not meet publication criteria are not shown.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, in cooperation with State and Federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 1998.